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Bücherschau.

I. Deutschamerikanische Schulgrammatiken.

Von *Otto Heller*, Washington University, St. Louis, Mo.

II.

Otis's Elementary German.

Elementary German. By the late *Charles P. Otis*, *Ph.D.*, Professor of Modern Languages in the Massachusetts Institute of Technology. Seventh edition, based on the sixth edition and edited by *Horatio Stevens White*, Professor of the German Language and Literature in the Cornell University. With additional revisions by *William Herbert Carruth*, Professor of the German Language and Literature in the University of Kansas. New York, Henry Holt & Co., F. W. Christern. Boston, Carl Schoenhof. (No date.)

The title is long, and full of promise: a seventh edition, bearing three names which sound well in the ears of American teachers, ought to be warrant for a high degree of excellence. For whatever may be the difficulties of expounding German grammar to the young American pupil, they can unquestionably be cleared away by three well-trained Germanists and experienced pedagogues working in harmonious effort. No wonder the book has held its own in the competition with more recent and, let this reveal my personal disposition towards it, far worthier elementary grammars. I became intimately acquainted with Otis's Grammar upon assuming the directorship of the German Department at the Chautauqua Assembly. There I found the little volume snugly established in the program and likewise in the affections of Chautauquans. Many of my students at the Assembly are teachers of German who use Otis's Elementary German in their schools. If I am not in error, it is also on the 'Regents' List' in the state of New York. Under these circumstances I believe that this text-book needs to be thoroughly revised and printed from new-set type, or—to be withdrawn from the market, lest the obvious blunders committed by Professor Otis and not purged away in the later editions continue to do mischief.

A mild protest against the 'showiness' of the title-page may not be out of place. For it is a deplorable fact that the average Anglo-American teacher of German and French in our High-Schools is crassly undereducated, linguistically, and inasmuch as for this reason he does not depend on his own judgment in selecting his text-books, but rather on that of the publisher's catalog or agent, it is plain enough that he cannot but be unduly impressed by the combination of three such good names. More than once, in correcting indisputably bad German, I have been confronted with the sometimes timid, sometimes confident rejoinder that the passage I was condemning was built upon a model in Otis's Elementary German, and that the model must be right, else would it not have been sifted out with the other mistakes, by at least one of two rigorous critics?

And so Professors White and Carruth, jointly with the late Professor Otis, appear to stand sponsors, in a way, for certain grammatical sins, of which the following will contain samples.

I shall not undertake a general review of the book, and so I need not speak of its many good qualities. They are sufficient, in my estimation, to justify a new,

radically revised, edition. On the other hand, it will not be necessary for me to give more than a few typical examples of its prevalent faults, in order to make good my charges: that it was not carefully compiled, and that it is not edited carefully enough.

In the theoretical explanations the student is not frequently misinformed, although occasionally such is the case, as when he reads, p. 187: The only prepositions governing the infinitive are *ohne, um, statt*. These stand at the beginning of the clause, with the infinitive preceded by *zu* at the end. *Er ging vorbei, ohne mich zu sehen*, he went past without seeing me. Or, when he is told, p. 261, that 'that, in order that' are translated by *damit, dass*, or—horrible dictu—*um dass!* But the explanations are, on the whole, so meagre as to be often misleading through ambiguity.

For example, on p. 193 the difference between *durch* und *von* is discussed, thus: *durch* is no longer used for the personal agent which is *von*, but expresses an impersonal agent or cause, etc. The student, not having been given to understand that this synonymic distinction relates to the *passive voice*, innocently translates, from one of the subsequent exercises: I sent the letter through a messenger, *ich sandte den Brief von einem Boten*.

Fault must be found with the exercises that accompany the lessons, both on account of their general character and their want of accuracy. Their general character is Ollendorffian. They lack coherence, continuity, and gradation. E.g. p. 180. 1. Do you wear a hat or a cap? 2. Were you acquainted with my brother William? 3. The work praises the master. 4. The accusative is the case which a transitive verb governs. 5. Liszt taught her [the] music. 5. Hunters call in Germany the ears of the hare "spoons", etc.

This is especially objectionable in the German exercises. Here at least the learner might be offered a more interesting matter than that furnished by entirely unrelated, sadly commonplace word-combination, such as:

P. 179. 1. Er trägt eine Mütze. 2. Ich wünsche ihn zu sehen. 3. Guten Tag, lieber Herr Müller. 4. Schönen Dank, Heinrich. 5. Betet einen frommen Spruch. 6. Er fragte mich manches über meinen Ausflug von gestern. 7. Er nannte ihn einen gemeinen Menschen, etc.

The only justification of such sentences consists possibly in their paradigmatic value. They should, then, at least be unimpeachable on the score of grammatic and idiomatic correctness. But we read:

P. 176. Alle Knochen will ich euch *abschlagen*.

P. 183. Lass das Büchlein *dein* Freund sein.

P. 189. Unfern des Berges höchsten Gipfels machten wir unser Frühstück.

Ibid. Ich ging an dessen Statt. Ibid. *Sonder* Zweifel ist das.

P. 203. Er stieg in *ein* Gasthaus ab.

P. 211. Mein Freund gab mir eine Einlasskarte, sonst würde ich nicht haben *eingehen* dürfen. (The ticket evidently admitted to a hospital for the obese.)

P. 223. *Der* Dogge lässt sich nicht necken, etc.

P. 70. *Abwärts* liegt das Dorf.

The vocabularies are both incomplete and inaccurate. This results in mistranslations on the part of the student, *go out* is translated *ausgehen*. The learner will therefore not seek for a vocable outside of his grammar in translating, on p. 211: Please ask whether people are allowed to go out here. Obviously, however, *ausgehen* cannot be used in this place, unless we strain the sentence. Expressions like *das lässt sich hören* (p. 223) and others with *lassen*, being of an idiomatic nature, should have been translated in the vocabulary. In *I scarcely need tell you that* (p. 211) *brauchen* not *dürfen* is required. On p. 216 the pupil will naturally

translate 'are you fond of music' by *mögen Sie die Musik?* Yet that is wrong. On p. 217 he learns to associate an undue emphasis with *wollen*, when he is to translate by means of it: 'I am determined to read this book through today.' 'I must, I think, write to him,' p. 220, is rather an unfortunate choice for a model sentence, as is likewise: 'Can I take a seat here?' on p. 211.

Ich lehre ihn die Musik is too uncommon an expression to be quoted as a paradigm, p. 178. Also, *es lüftet* is obsolete in conversational German (p. 178). *To fall to one's share* is not *einem zu teil fallen*, but *werden* (p. 176).

The book also contains many conversational exercises. How little these will serve the practical needs of the pupils is easily seen. They deal chiefly with history and geography and contain for the most part empty names. E. g. p. 177. 1. Welche Nebenflüsse hat die Weser? Die Aller (mit dem Nebenflusse Leine), die Fulda und die Werra sind Nebenflüsse der Weser. 2. Welche Städte liegen an der Weser? Die Städte Bremen und Minden. 3. Welche Städte liegen an der Leine? Die Städte Hannover und Göttingen. 4. Welche Städte liegen an der Fulda? Die Städte Cassel und Fulda liegen an der Fulda, etc.

Occasionally, bad German has crept even into the *Sprachübungen*, as for instance p. 148: *In welchem Lande werden die grossen Seedampfer fabriziert?* One might ask, with better reason: *In welchem Lande werden die deutschen Grammatiken fabriziert?*

The electroplates from which Otis's Elementary German is printed, are badly worn. Another reason for re-printing the book from types. Typographic errors occur in many places, for example on pp. 182, 203, 210, 212, 219.

II. Bücherbesprechungen.

Gustav Freytag, Soll und Haben. Abridged and edited with introduction and notes by *George T. Files, Ph. D.* Boston (D. C. Heath & Co.), 1901. VI+231+32 S.

Noch alle verkürzten Schulausgaben deutscher Romane, die mir in den letzten Jahren zu Gesicht gekommen sind, haben mich angemetet wie etwa Teile von Gemälden, die aus der Leinwand herausgeschnitten und notdürftig zusammengefleckt wären (trotz allem, was aus Lessings Laokoon über das Nebeneinander in der Malerei und das Nacheinander in der Dichtung Schönes vorgebracht werden könnte); und das Sündhafte solcher Verstümmelung eines Kunstwerks wächst im geometrischen Verhältnis zum Kunstwert. Dem grossen Romane Freytags widerfährt dies Schicksal schon zum zweiten Male; die Leser der P. M. werden sich des wuchtigen Angriffs erinnern, den Leo Stern in Bd. I, 2, S. 19ff. gegen Frh. Bultmanns Ausgabe gerichtet hat. Ein direktes Ergebnis der durch Herrn Sterns Artikel hervorgerufenen Erörterungen für und wider ist Dr.

Files' Ausgabe offenbar nicht; wenigstens sind die daselbst gegebenen Anregungen hier nicht verwertet. Welche nennenswerten Vorzüge das Buch gegenüber der Bultmannschen Ausgabe besässe, will mir auch nicht recht einleuchten; im Gegenteil scheint mir die in der letzteren enthaltene Liste der von der Herausgeberin eingefügten Stellen empfehlenswert. Unerlässlich wäre meines Erachtens eine Kennzeichnung solcher Einfügungen durch abweichende Schrift im Texte oder Gebrauch eckiger Klammern (vgl. S. 132-3); sowie auch bestimmte Bezeichnung der Stellen, wo das Ausgelassene nicht in gedrängter Darstellung erscheint, um dem Verfasser nicht technische und stilistische Mängel zuzuschreiben, die lediglich durch das Verfahren der Herausgeber verschuldet sind; vgl. z. B. S. 194, Z. 1, ebenda Z. 11 und S. 196, Z. 21, mit den vorausgehenden Abschnitten.

Ein paar Fragen: Verdankt Freytags Roman seine Beliebtheit einzig einer spannenden Handlung? Ist der Titel des Originals für einen Auszug aus dem